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New - Janne

FACT SHEET

L-866

ROSES: HOW TO PLANT

Everett E. Janne • Extension Landscape Horticulturist • Texas A&M University

Planning a rose garden? If this is your first attempt, begin on a small scale. A dozen well-cared-for plants will produce more flowers and give greater pleasure than 4 or 5 dozen poorly cared for plants that take all your space and time.

Locate the rosebed where it will receive at least 6 hours of full sun per day. Light afternoon shade can be tolerated and is often desirable during the hottest part of the summer. Heavily shaded areas will produce bushes that are rank and have few flowers. Mildew and black spot disease also are more prevalent in shaded areas.

Good air circulation is essential. It aids in the rapid evaporation of morning dew thereby aiding in disease control. Some protection from prevailing strong winds is desirable as it reduces damage to the flowers.

Avoid planting near trees and shrubs having vigorous root systems or provide some form of mechanical barrier against them. The rose root is a poor competitor against this type of intrusion.

Try to locate the rose bed where it can be enjoyed from the interior of the home. Roses are deciduous and not very attractive during the dormant season. For this reason they should be visible while in bloom but should not be the dominant landscape element viewed from the window.

Good drainage, both surface and subsurface, is essential in a rose bed. Roses do not like "wet feet." Poor drainage usually can be corrected by installing a tile drain system as illustrated in figure 1, or by planting in raised beds using redwood or masonry framing, figure 2. In much of the Gulf Coast area, the beds must be raised as much as 12 inches above the surrounding soil surface to provide the necessary drainage.

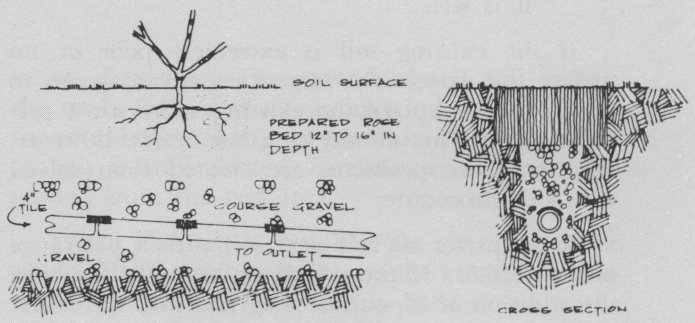

Fig. 1. Ditch for tile drain should be 2 to 3 feet deep and slanted 3 inches to every 100 feet. Place 4 to 6 inches of coarse gravel in the bottom of the ditch. Lay 4-inch concrete tile end to end. Cover tile joints with asphalt roofing paper to prevent entry of loose soil. Tile should drain into a ditch, storm sewer or a dry well.

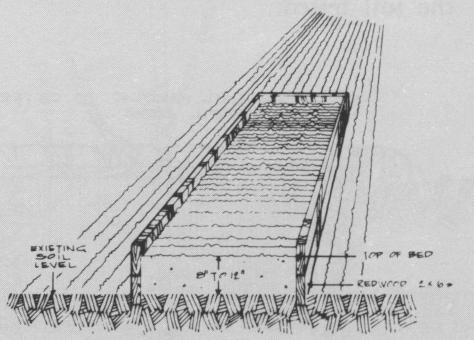

Fig. 2. Raised bed construction using redwood timbers.

Although a fertile soil is highly desirable, most soils can be modified and improved with the addition of organic matter or compost, and nutrients.

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SOIL PREPARATION

For best results, begin the actual bed preparation 3 to 5 months before the anticipated planting date.

1. Remove surface vegetation from the selected area.
2. Spread 2 to 4 inches of sterilized cattle or sheep manure, composted organic matter, sawdust, shredded bark or a combination of these over the area.
3. Add superphosphate at the rate of 6 to 8 pounds per 100 square feet of bed area.
4. Spade these materials into the soil to a depth of 12 to 14 inches.
5. Wet down the area and work once a month until planting time. Do not work soil while it is wet.

If the existing soil is extremely poor or no surface soil exists, it is sometimes advantageous to excavate and replace the existing soil with a prepared soil. This should be a last resort, however, as often more problems are created than solved with this procedure.

Roses prefer slightly acid soil with a pH range of 6.0 to 6.5. If the soil is on the alkaline side, the addition of 2 pounds of agricultural sulfur per 100 square feet should be worked into the bed along with the organic matter. Repeat this application to the surface of the bed each spring or as soil tests indicate.

A soil sample can be taken and a soil test made to determine fertilizer needs of the soil. Your county agricultural agent or your fertilizer dealer can supply you with information on how to have the soil tested.

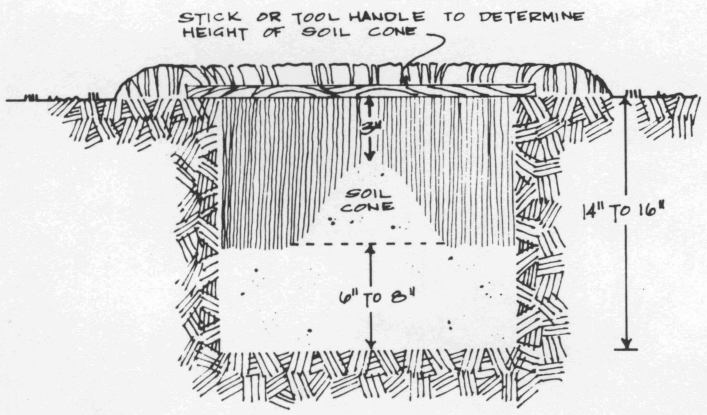

Fig. 3. Dimensions of planting hole showing backfill and soil mound or cone.

PLANTING TIME

The planting season is governed by the availability of dormant rose bushes. Depending upon weather conditions, plants in most of the commercial rose production areas are not ready to dig until mid-November and early December. Roses dug before this time are usually green and do not transplant readily. In most areas of Texas they may be planted as soon as sound, fully dormant bushes become available. In the far West and in the Panhandle planting should take place in mid or late February. The advantage of late fall or early winter planting is that the roots can become established before warm weather forces top growth.

If weather conditions are unfavorable or if for any reason the plants cannot be planted as soon as received from the store, nursery, or mail order house, take steps to prevent drying out of the root system and keep the plants in a cool location. Refrigeration at 35 to 40 degrees F. is ideal if a high humidity can be maintained.

SPACING ROSE PLANTS

Hybrid tea and grandiflora roses usually are spaced 24 to 36 inches apart depending upon the vigor of the individual variety and the effect desired in the rose bed. Floribundas usually are spaced 18 to 24 inches apart. If two parallel rows of plants are to be placed in a bed, the bed should be at least 5 feet wide with a minimum of 3 feet between rows. Allow 4 to 5 feet of walk area between beds to facilitate maintenance and care.

PLANTING BARE-ROOT ROSES

Soak the roots of the rose plants in a bucket or tub of water for several hours before planting or wrap the plants in clean wet sacks to allow the roots and stems to absorb all the moisture they can.

Dig individual holes at least 12 to 14 inches deep and 16 to 18 inches in diameter depending on the size of the root system, figure 3. Replace the soil in the hole so that it comes to within 8 inches of the top. Firm the soil with the hands, then form a mound or cone of soil in the center of the hole with the top of the cone about 3 inches below bed level. Check this by placing a stick or shovel handle across the top of the hole, figure 3.

Remove one plant at a time from the bucket, planting it before removing the next one. Cut off all damaged or broken roots with a sharp knife or pruning shears. Trim off the tip of all other roots about 1 inch to encourage new feeder root development. If the plant has a large root system, enlarge

the hole rather than cutting the roots to fit the hole.

Place the base of the plant on the mound of soil so the roots spread naturally down its slope. Cover the roots with soil, packing it firmly in place so there are no air pockets between the roots and the soil, figure 4.

Caution: Do not attempt to plant when soil is wet. The soil is too wet if it can be pressed into a ball that will not crumble when you attempt to pick it up with the thumb and forefinger.

After the roots are covered with soil, fill the hole with water and allow it to drain away; then refill with water. After the water has drained away

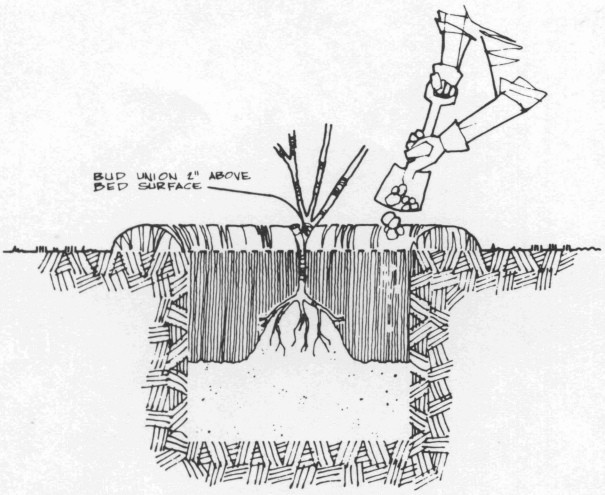

Fig. 4. Spread root system over the soil cone and replace top soil. Tamp firmly as roots are covered.

the second time, fill the hole with soil, mounding it slightly above the bed level to allow for settling. At this point the base of the bud union should be about 2 inches above the soil level, figure 4.

If soil settling causes the bud union to sink lower than 2 inches above the bed level, raise it to the proper height by gently pulling the plant up with a pumping motion.

In the upper Panhandle, the bud union should be placed slightly below the soil level to protect it from severe winter cold. Dig the hole slightly deeper and keep the top of the soil mound about 5 inches below the bed level, figure 5.

Using soil from your compost heap or from another portion of the garden, form a mound around the plant as much as 6 inches above the bud

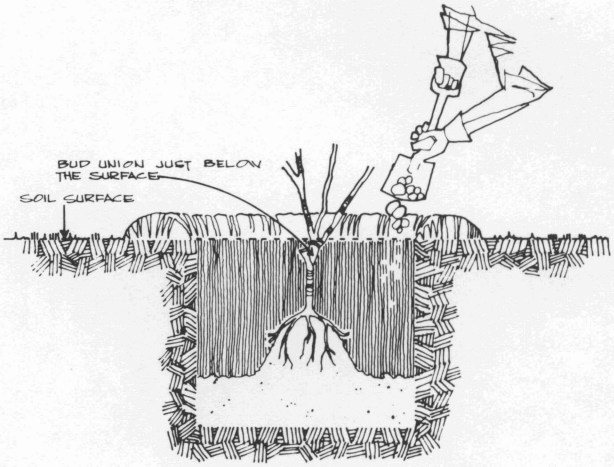

Fig. 5. In northern areas of the state, place the bud union just below the soil surface.

union, figure 6. The mound of soil will protect the canes from desiccation by wind and sun until the roots have a chance to grow. In the spring when growth is well started, carefully remove the soil mound from the bed area.

When planting is complete, the canes should be cut back to 8 to 10 inches above the ground. Sometimes this pruning has already been done by the nursery or other source. Select a point about ¼ inch above an outside bud and with sharp pruning shears make a slanting cut as shown in figure 6. Remove any weak or spindly growth arising from the base of the canes prior to the placement of the protective soil mound.

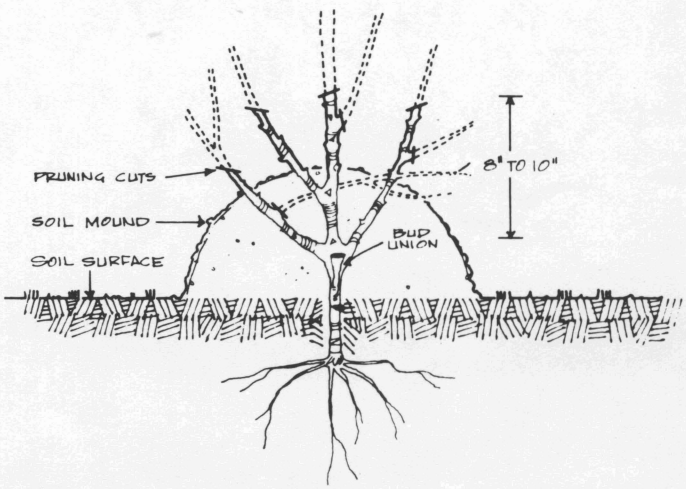

Fig. 6. Place 6-inch protective mound of soil over newly planted bush. Prune back main canes to 8 to 10 inches above the bud union.

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